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## Mining Weblogs for Information

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## Mining Weblogs - Outline

- What, exactly, is a blog?
- How blogs work (anatomy and theory)
- Tools for reading and gathering blog content
- LIS blogs and bloggers
- Blog resources

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## Blog lexicon

- Blogger
- Blogging
- Blogosphere
- Blogroll
- Bloggies
- Bloggorhoea
- Moblogging
- Blog person, blog people

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## Weblogs ➡ 'Blogs

- A web site that contains an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks provided by the writer (Merriam-Webster, 1999)
- A web page containing brief, chronologically arranged items of information (Peter Scott, Libdex)
- A log of the web (Meatball Wiki)

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## Alternate definition

A blog is a species of interactive electronic diary by means of which the unpublishable, untrammelled by editors or the rules of grammar, can communicate their thoughts via the web.

Given the quality of the writing in the blogs I have seen, I doubt that many of the Blog People are in the habit of sustained reading of complex texts. It is entirely possible that their intellectual needs are met by an accumulation of random facts and paragraphs.

Michael Gorman, ALA president-elect  
"Revenge of the Blog People!"  
*Library Journal*, Feb. 15, 2005  
<http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA502009>

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## Blog forms

- Personal
  - Online diaries
  - Family blogs
- Informational
  - News
  - Commentary and analysis
  - Annotated lists of Internet resources
  - Reviews of new products
  - Organizations: projects, news, information
  - Rich media (images, video, audio)

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## Library blogs

- Library sponsored
  - Marketing
  - Topical
  - Internal
  - Organizational
- Independent
  - Front-line
  - Innovator and commentator

Aaron Schmidt & Michael Stephens  
<http://www.tametheweb.com/presentations/purdueblogs/TypesofLISWeblogs.pdf>

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## Blog characteristics

- Frequent postings
- Brief entries
- Personality (sometimes)
- Informal or casual tone
- Immediate and intimate (no editors)

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## Blog history, part 1

- History? Ask Yahoo!  
<http://ask.yahoo.com/ask/20021115.html>
- 1993: Mosaic's What's New? Page Earlier?
- 1997: Jorn Barger, Robot Wisdom Weblog
- 1998: Handful of blogs (23)

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## Blog history, part 2

- 1999: Blogger launches "push-button publishing"; soon other free weblog-creation programs become widely available
- 2004: Year of the Blog
- 2005: 8.4 million blogs, a new one created every 5.8 seconds (15,000 a day)

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## Blog impact

- 2002: Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott unseated
- 2003: Jayson Blair plagiarism scandal results in resignation of NY Times editors
- 2004: Swift boat controversy
- 2004: Rathergate

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## The state of blogging

Pew / Internet Study, Jan. 2005  
[http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/144/report\\_display.asp](http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/144/report_display.asp)

- Readership increased 58% in 2004
- 7% of Internet users are blogging (8 million Americans)
- 27% of Internet users read blogs (32 million Americans)
- 38% of Internet users know what a blog is (46 million Americans)

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## Blogs as information tools

- New paradigms for information dissemination and information acquisition
- Alternative to mainstream press (e.g., warbloggers)
- Post news and information immediately
- Interactive (comments)
- Social network: interconnected blogosphere, collaborative efforts

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## But are bloggers journalists?

- Press credentials granted to bloggers at some events (political conventions, conferences)
- Blogs can be biased and unedited
- No professional standards
- Lots of bloggerhoes
- Check source and authority
- Caveat lector!

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## Blog anatomy

- Chronological arrangement
- Permalinks
- Archives
- Search engine
- Blogroll
- Authorship
- Comments (not always)

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## Blog examples

- Blogger hosted  
[It's all good](#)
- Published by author  
[The Shifted Librarian](#)
- Published on commercial site  
[Library Stuff](#)

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The screenshot shows a Blogger blog post titled "It's all good" by Benita Ballant. The post is dated Friday, April 01, 2005. The content discusses a blog from the OCLC Online Computer Library Center staff and a link to a book list. The blog has a green and yellow polka-dot background. The Blogger interface includes a search bar, a "GET THIS BLOG" button, and a "POST BLOG" button. The "PREVIOUS POSTS" section lists several other posts by Benita Ballant.

The screenshot shows a Blogger blog post titled "Thank you, Waco!" by Rowland Hatheway. The post is dated Friday, April 01, 2005. The content discusses the senior editor of the Waco (Texas) Tribune Herald and a column that was syndicated in a number of newspapers. The blog has a green and yellow polka-dot background. The Blogger interface includes a search bar, a "GET THIS BLOG" button, and a "POST BLOG" button. The "PREVIOUS POSTS" section lists several other posts by Benita Ballant.



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## Blog theory: how blogs work

- Content stored in database
  - Searchable
  - Can be distributed in various formats
  - Can be read on various platforms (e.g., browsers, PDAs and mobile devices, aggregators)
- Content available via RSS or Atom feeds, which is a type of XML (eXtensible Markup Language)

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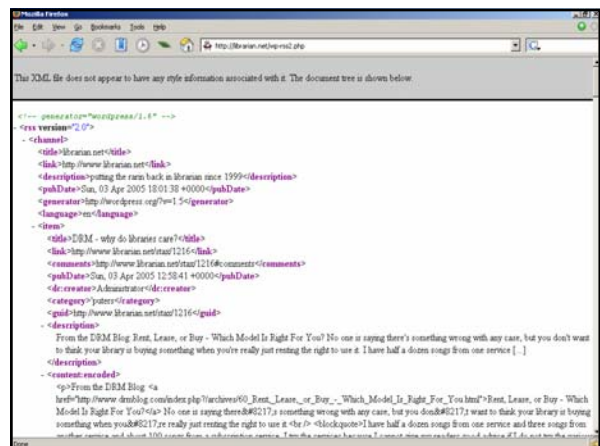
## Blog theory: RSS

- Really Simple Syndication
  - Rich Site Summary or
  - RDF (Resource Description Framework) Site Summary
- RSS feeds bring content to user
- Blog/news content gathered (aggregated) in one place – no more checking multiple sites!
- Look for “syndicate this site” or

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## Blog theory: aggregators

- Online (web-based) aggregators
  - Bloglines
  - My Yahoo!
  - Feedster
  - Newsgator
- Desktop aggregators
  - Sage (Firefox plug-in)
  - Pluck (Internet Explorer plug-in)
  - Amphetadesk, Feed Demon, NetNewsWire (Mac) (stand alone)

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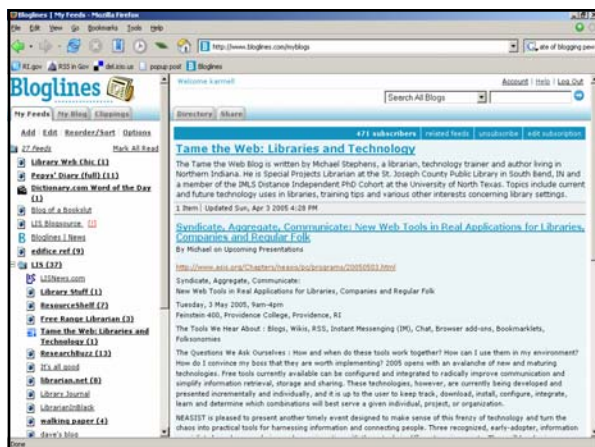
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## Bloglines

- <http://www.bloglines.com>
- Bloglines in 3-1/2 steps
  - <http://joy.mollprojects.com/blog/projects/quickrss.html>
  - Quick set-up for librarians includes subscriptions to popular library feeds
- More detailed Bloglines tutorial
  - Getting Started with RSS  
<http://frl.bluehighways.com/frlarchives/000123.html>

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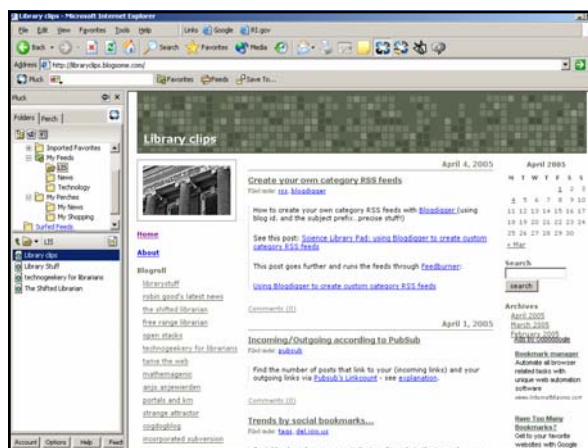
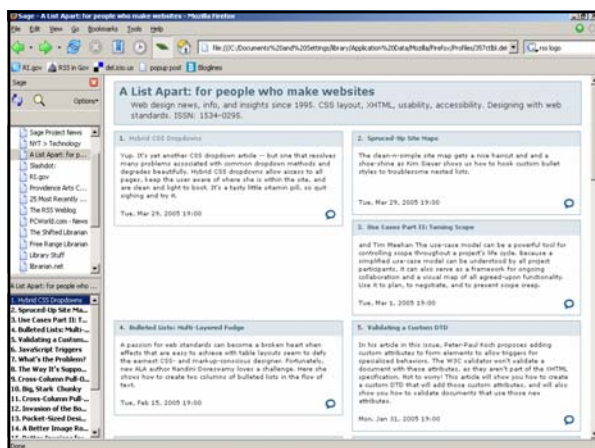


## Desktop aggregators

- Browser plug-ins (basic aggregators)
  - Sage: Plug-in aggregator for Firefox  
<http://sage.mozdev.org/>
  - Pluck: if you must use IE . . .  
<http://www.pluck.com/>
- Desktop aggregators  
<http://allrss.com/rssreaders.html>
- If you use more than one computer, get a web-based account

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## Blogs and librarians

- Professional news
- Technology news and topics
- Current trends and hot topics
- Information resources
- Conference blogs
- Professional support

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## Who's blogging?

- Published authors
- Practitioners
- Academics
- Movers and shakers
- Frontline staff

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## Ten LIS Blogs

### #1. Library Stuff

- Steven Cohen
  - Law librarian
  - PubSub Concepts
- Published by Information Today
- The library weblog dedicated to resources for keeping current and professional development.
- <http://www.librarystuff.net/>

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## Ten LIS Blogs

### #2. The Shifted Librarian

- Jenny Levine
  - Internet Development Specialist
  - Suburban Library System, Burr Ridge, IL
  - Information technology evangelist
- Shifting Libraries at the speed of byte!  
Goal: help librarians become as technologically adept as our users
- <http://www.theshiftedlibrarian.com/>

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## Ten LIS Blogs

### #3. Tame the Web

- Michael Stephens
  - Special Projects Librarian, [St. Joseph County Public Library](#), South Bend, IN
- Current and future technology uses in libraries, training tips, staff development and various other topics concerning library settings
- <http://www.tametheweb.com/ttwblog/>

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## Ten LIS Blogs

### #4. LIS News

- Blake Carver
  - Former Assistant Professor and Web Librarian, Ohio State University Libraries
  - Currently a special librarian, Buffalo, NY
- Collaborative weblog devoted to current events and news in the world of Library and Information Science.
- <http://lisnews.com/>

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## Ten LIS Blogs

### #5. It's all good

- OCLC Online Computer Library Center Staff
- All things present and future that impact libraries and library users
- Conversation that starts with the Environmental Scan and wanders around from there. Content not vetted by OCLC.
- <http://scanblog.blogspot.com/>

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## Ten LIS Blogs

### #6. Free Range Librarian

- Karen G. Schneider
  - Director, Librarians' Index to the Internet <http://lii.org>
  - Writer, librarian, speaker
  - ALA Councilmember-at-large
- Postcards from the edge of librarianship. (Blogging and ethics, intellectual freedom, technical issues, etc.)
- <http://freerangelibrarian.com/>

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## Ten LIS Blogs

### #7. Librarian.net

- Jessamyn West
  - Library activist, speaker, writer
  - Vermont librarian, technology trainer
  - ALA Councilmember-at-large
- Putting the rar in librarian since 1999 - intersection of libraries, technology and politics
- <http://librarian.net/>

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## Ten LIS Blogs

### #8. ResearchBuzz

- Tara Calishain
  - Author of *Google Hacks* and other books on Internet searching
- Items on search engines, online databases, and other information resources.
- Weekly email digest available
- <http://www.researchbuzz.com/>

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## Ten LIS Blogs

### #9. Resource Shelf

- Gary Price
  - Former reference librarian
  - George Washington University
  - Information research consultant, writer, speaker
- Resources and news for information professionals
- Weekly email digest available
- <http://www.resourceshelf.com/>

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## Ten LIS Blogs

### #10. RSS Feed

- Librarians' Index to the Internet <http://lii.org>

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## More LIS blogs and feeds

- LISfeeds (aggregates content)  
<http://lisfeeds.com/>
- LibDex: Library Weblogs (Peter Scott)  
<http://www.libdex.com/weblogs.html>
- Open Directory Project: Library Weblogs  
[http://dmoz.org/Reference/Libraries/Library\\_and\\_Information\\_Science/Weblogs/](http://dmoz.org/Reference/Libraries/Library_and_Information_Science/Weblogs/)
- Blogrolls on blogs you read

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## Library blogs

- Blogging libraries  
[http://www.blogwithoutalibrary.net/?page\\_id=94](http://www.blogwithoutalibrary.net/?page_id=94)
- RSS(sm): Rich site services  
<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~CYBERSTACKS/RSS.htm>
- St. Joseph County Public Library  
<http://lishost.org/~sjcpl/>
- Kansas City Public Library – subject guides  
<http://www.kclibrary.org/rss/>

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## Searching weblogs

- Blogdigger  
<http://www.blogdigger.com/>
- Daypop  
<http://www.daypop.com/>
- Feedster  
<http://www.feedster.com/>
- NewsIsFree  
<http://www.newsisfree.com/>

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## Blogs as current awareness tools

- Technorati  
what's happening on the web right now  
<http://www.technorati.com/>
- Blogdex (MIT)  
weblog diffusion index  
<http://blogdex.net/>
- Blogrunner  
tracks breaking news stories  
<http://www.blogrunner.com>

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## More mining tools

- Blogarama  
<http://www.blogarama.com/>
- Blogstreet  
<http://www.blogstreet.com/>
- Syndic8  
<http://www.syndic8.com/>
- LORI: Blogs, RSS and Data Syndication  
<http://www.ori.ri.gov/webdesign/syndication/weblogs.php>
- What I'm reading (caveat lector)  
<http://del.icio.us/kmellor/>

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## Parting thoughts

- Blogs have a wealth of professional information
- Blogs can connect you with the broader LIS world and keep you current
- RSS brings content to you
- Aggregating information saves time and is more productive than browsing
- Start small and grow your collection
- Weed non-productive feeds
- Blogging facilitates knowledge sharing

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## Questions? Comments?

Wanna get your own blog?

<http://www.blogger.com>

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## Final announcements

- Upcoming CE?
  - Blogging for librarians??
  - Wikis???
- May 3  
NEASIST: New Web Tools: Jenny Levine,  
Michael Stephens & Megan Fox  
Providence College
- June 2  
RILA Conference  
Jessamyn West

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